

J&K to face Karnataka in Ranji Trophy final on Feb 24

STATE TIMES NEWS

LUCKNOW: Karnataka entered the Ranji Trophy final after a hiatus of 11 years, advancing by virtue of a first innings lead from their drawn semifinal match against Uttarakhand here on Thursday.

Karnataka will face Jammu and Kashmir in the title clash at Hubballi from February 24.

Resuming the fifth and final day from their overnight 299 from six, Karnataka lost the remaining four wickets quickly to get bowled out for 323 for an overall lead of 826 runs.

Uttarakhand fought through fifties by Aneesh Sudha (66), Sachin Rawat (53 not out) and Abhay Negi (57 not), thwarting Karnataka's ambitions for an outright win.

They finished their second innings at 260 for six.

However, the massive first innings lead was enough for them to ensure a passage to the final.

Karnataka were pressing for an outright win after reducing Uttarakhand to 156 for six mid-way through the second session.

But Negi and Rawat hung in there, adding 104 runs for the seventh wicket before both the captains decided to shake hands some 30 minutes after tea.

Now, Karnataka will eye their ninth Ranji Trophy title, and the last of which came in the 2014-15 season under the leadership of R Vinay Kumar.

In fact, Karnataka had then achieved the rare distinction of becoming the second domestic side after

Mumbai to win all three the titles twice in as many seasons.

Following their success in the 2013-14 season, Karnataka grabbed the Ranji, Irani and Vijay Hazare trophies in the 2014-15 season as well.

Robin Uthappa led the run-chart with 912 runs while Vinay was the leading wicket-taker along with Mumbai's Shardul Thakur -- 48 wickets.

KL Rahul, Karun Nair, Mayank Agarwal and Shreyas Gopal are the only four survivors in the current Karnataka squad from that period of dominance.

On that other hand, Jammu and Kashmir will eye their maiden Ranji title, having reached the final for the first time in six decades.

Western Railway crosses Rs 500 cr mark in scrap sale under mission zero scrap

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Western Railway has achieved a significant milestone in scrap disposal by crossing the Rs 500 crore mark during the financial year 2025-26.

This achievement reflects Western Railway's continued commitment to making all its establishments and units scrap-free under the Mission Zero Scrap initiative.

According to a press release issued by the Chief Public Relations Officer, Western Railway, Vineet Abhishek, WR has recorded a total scrap sale of Rs 506.63 crore as on 17th February, 2026, against the target of Rs 470 crore set by the Railway Board for the current financial year.

Another feather in JKCA's vibrant cap: Sandhya, Chitra, Rubia storm into North Zone squad

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) has added another vibrant feather to its cap with the selection of three standout women cricketers in the North Zone squad for the Senior Women's One-Day Tournament. The selection meeting, convened by the Member Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) of JKCA, Meenu Singh Slathia at Hostel Ground, Jammu, brought together esteemed selectors namely Reema Malhotra (DDCA), Rajni Kumari (HCA), Rajvinder Kour (PCA), Surinder Mehta (HPCA), Anit Prashar (UTCA), and Anuradha Sharma (JKCA). From a competitive 15-member squad, the selectors unanimously picked explosive batting all-rounder Rubia Syed, gritty off-spinner Sandhya Sayal, and stylish bat-



ting all-rounder Chitra Singh Janwal from J&K. Standby player Rudrakshi Chib (JKCA) also earned a spot.

These seasoned performers dominated the league phase: Chitra smashed 245 runs with

two half-centuries; Rubia blazed 221 runs, including two power-packed fifties; and Sandhya snared 12 wickets with her economical spin.

North Zone Squad: Priya Punia (DDCA), Pragya Rawat (WK) (DDCA), Shweta Sehrawat (Captain) (DDCA), Tanisha Ohlan (HCA), Rubia Syed (JKCA), Ridhima Aggarwal (PCA), Ayushi Soni (DDCA), Nazma (DDCA), Sandhya Sayal (JKCA), Triveni Vashishta (HCA), Sushma Verma (WK) (HPCA), Chitra Singh Janwal (JKCA), Tarunika (UTCA), Nandini Sharma (UTCA) Subject to fitness, Kashvee Gautam (VC) (UTCA) Subject to availability and fitness.

Standbys: Soni Yadav (DDCA), Suman Guliyar (HCA), Shivani Singh (HPCA), Pragati Singh (PCA), Sheetal Rana (HCA), Jyoti Thakur (HPCA), Rudrakshi Chib (JKCA). Brig Anil Gupta, Member-Administration, JKCA, congratulated the trio on this landmark achievement, hailing them as "special talents" and wishing them success in their future endeavours.

MSCBMC Trust, IGNCa begin 'Adi Shankaracharya Sansar' National Art Workshop



Trust members and artists during the workshop at Srinagar.

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A seven-day National Art Workshop titled 'Adi Shankaracharya Sansar' commenced today at the 43 Battalion Headquarters CRPF, District Police Lines Budgam, Srinagar. The workshop is being organized by the Master Sansar Chand Baru Memorial Charitable Trust (MSCBMC Trust) in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Scheduled from February 19 to 25, 2026, the workshop brings together seven renowned national-level artists and young art students from across the country to creatively explore the spiritual and his-

torical legacy of Adi Shankaracharya. The theme centres on the rich spiritual heritage associated with the 8th-century philosopher and proponent of Advaita Vedanta.

During his visit to Kashmir, Adi Shankaracharya is believed to have meditated at the hilltop shrine now known as the Shankaracharya Temple, originally called Gopadri Hill. Overlooking Srinagar and the Dal Lake, the ancient temple remains a revered spiritual landmark symbolizing Kashmir's deep-rooted philosophical traditions. Historians regard his visit as pivotal in revitalizing Sanatan philosophical thought in the region, once a prominent center of learning.

Participating artists include Mohd Irfan Bhat, Mohammed Suhail Khan, Umair Niyaz Reshi, Syed Mursaleen, Suhaib Ahmad Hakeem (all from Srinagar), along with Sharmila Sharma from Delhi and Apurba Karati from Kolkata. Many are art scholars pursuing higher studies, including master's programs in fine arts and institutions such as Jamia Millia Islamia.

Artists are creating live paintings inspired by the temple, Kashmir's spiritual landscape, and Advaita philosophy-depicting unity, knowledge, and inner awakening.

Anuradha Rishi, President of MSCBMC Trust, praised the students' dedication and artistic excellence, emphasizing that art fosters positivity and cultural harmony. She expressed hope for continued governmental support for such initiatives.

The workshop also features cultural programs, encouraging artistic exchange and national integration. It will conclude with an exhibition in Srinagar showcasing artworks dedicated to Adi Shankaracharya's enduring legacy.

Gair Mumkin Khad issue a matter of survival for small farmers: Jasrotia

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Speaking in the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly during the discussion on grants for the Chief Minister, MLA Rajiv Jasrotia raised pressing concerns, focusing on the long-pending M u m k i n Khad land issue, welfare of daily wage workers, balanced regional development, and equitable allocation of resources.



ue to serve on meagre wages without job security or clear regularization policies. He urged the government to establish a transparent, time-bound roadmap for wage enhancement and regularization.

Jasrotia said governance must move beyond rhetoric to measurable outcomes in health, education, employment, infrastructure, and security. He expressed concern over the plight of thousands of daily wage workers, including Anganwadi workers, SPOs, NHM staff, Rehbar-e-Zirar and Rehbar-e-Khel employees, and teachers engaged under academic arrangements, who contin-

ue to serve on meagre wages without job security or clear regularization policies. He urged the government to establish a transparent, time-bound roadmap for wage enhancement and regularization.

Highlighting agriculture, allied sectors, and tourism as key economic pillars, he called for balanced regional investment. He noted that major infrastructure allocations have largely benefited Kashmir and stressed the need to upgrade tourist destinations in the Jammu division such as Patnitop, Sanasar, Mansar, and Sarthar.

He also pressed for revival of strategic projects including the Lakhampur-Basohli-Bhadarwah corridor, the Jammu-Poonch railway line, and fast-tracking of the Shahpur Kandi project and the proposed solar project at Kathua.

PG JU emerges overall champion in Athletics



Winner teams posing for photograph with dignitaries at JU.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The combined side of Post Graduate (PG) Departments of University of Jammu (JU) clinched the overall championship trophy securing highest 61 points in the 48th annual athletics meet of JU held on the main campus, here today.

Government Degree College (GDC) Udhampur remained overall runners-up with 50 points. The men's overall trophy bagged by GDC Udhampur with 47 points whereas the women's title trophy went to Government College for Women (GCW) Udhampur with 36 points.

Uttkarsh Barnwal of GDC Udhampur was adjudged best athlete in the men sec-

tion while the Taniya Devi of GDC Billawar named best women athlete.

Dr Vikram Singh Sahi, Director, Central Library, JU was the chief guest in the valedictory function, who presented the title trophies and other individual prizes in the presence of Director Sports, JU. He congratulated the Directorate of Sports for the successful conduct.

Sharat Chander Singh, general secretary, and Ravinder Singh, vice president of J&K Amateur Athletics Association were the special guests.

Dr. Mandeep Singh, Assistant Professor, Directorate of Sports and Physical Education, JU presented vote of thanks.

The technical panel comprised Ravinder Singh, Nirmal Singh, Gurucharan Singh, Chamel Singh, Harvinder Singh, Gurbachan Singh, Amit Sharma and Parveen Singh.

Prominent among others present were Dr. Vimal Kishore, Raj Kumar Bakshi, Ravish Vaid, Vikas Karlopiya, Gagan Kumar, Padam Dev Singh, Jai Bharat, Balbir Singh, Ajaz Malik, Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Dr. Danish Kumar, Dr. Jaswant Singh, Dr. Vikesh Sharma, Dr. Rupali Slathia, Alyas, Goutam Sharma, Ravi Kumar, Tanpreet Singh, Sanjeev Kumar, Harinderpal Singh, Inderjeet Singh, Dr. Mahak, Dr. Devesh Kumar, Rishiv Sharma and Rieha Mandla.

FICCI FLO JKL, Nidra create employment for over 100 women through strategic industry

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: FICCI FLO Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh has successfully created sustainable employment opportunities for over 100 women through skilling-to-employment initiative in collaboration with Nidra.

Under this impactful program, FICCI FLO JKL adopted a "Train the Trainer" model under Skill to Scale vertical headed by Deepthi Gandotra and Iruvanthika Chowdhary, by training trainers from 20 Self Help Groups (SHGs) in stitching. Each of these Trained leaders further trained five to six women within their respective SHGs, thereby expanding the initiative's reach to over 100 women at the grassroots level.

Following the successful completion of the training phase, these women have now secured permanent employment in collaboration with Nidra, to stitch pillow covers, ensuring a steady source of income for them. This structured approach



FICCI FLO JKL members and others during the event.

not only strengthened Local SHGs but also created a sustainable production ecosystem linking grassroots women directly to the industry. Speaking on the initiative, Aarti Chowdhary, Chairperson FICCI FLO JKL, stated: "At FICCI FLO JKL, our commitment has always been to ensure that skilling leads to real economic independence. Through this collaboration, we have successfully converted training into assured employment, completing the full circle of employment. This initiative reflects our promise and our purpose - to

create meaningful, measurable impact in the lives of women.

Addressing the gathering Sahil Anand, Managing Director Nidra Shared: As responsible entrepreneurs, we believe it is our Socio-Economic duty to contribute towards the upliftment of women at the grassroots level. We have always valued initiatives that empower women at the grassroots level, and this collaboration with FICCI FLO JKL aligns perfectly with that vision. We are pleased to support this initiative and look forward to continuing our association to

create more such meaningful opportunities.

Members present at the event include Varuna Anand-National Initiative Head Partnership & Collaborations, Ruchika Guota-Imm. Past Chairperson, Varsha Bansal-Sr. Vice Chairperson, Rupika Sahai-Vice Chairperson, Sona Mehta-Treasurer, Nandita Bajaj-Secretary Deepthi Gandotra and Iruvanthika Chowdhary.

This initiative stands as a true reflection of FICCI FLO JKL's guiding Motto, "The Power To Empower". By transforming skill development into sustainable livelihood opportunities, the chapter has once again demonstrated its unwavering dedication to women's economic empowerment and grassroots upliftment. FICCI FLO JKL remains committed to fostering similar Partnerships that bridge the gap between training and employment, ensuring long-term, scalable impact for women across region.

India is regarded in Mongolia as a sacred geography and a 'Spiritual Neighbor: Shekhawat

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The two-day international conference titled 'Cultural Interflow between India and Mongolia', organized by the Department of Brihattar Bharat and Area Studies of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, to mark seventy years of diplomatic relations between India and Mongolia, was inaugurated at the Samvet Auditorium of IGNCA in New Delhi today.

A special exhibition showcasing visual representations of Mongolian culture was inaugurated on the occasion and is open to the public at IGNCA's Darshanam Gallery until 25 February. The conference brings together 31 scholars from India, Mongolia, the United States of America, France, and other countries, with 75 research papers being presented over two days.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest Union



Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat stated that the conference reflects the shared spiritual and cultural traditions between India and Mongolia.

He observed that exchanges between the two nations have extended beyond religion to fields such as astronomy, calendrical sciences, medicine, literature, and philosophy. Referring to the Mongolian Kangyur, he described it as a significant record of linguistic and philosophical scholarship and emphasized that its preservation and digitization strengthen civilizational dia-

logue and cultural diplomacy.

He recalled the Prime Minister's reference to India as a 'spiritual neighbor' during his 2015 visit to Mongolia and underlined that the conference marks seventy years of diplomatic relations and centuries of civilizational bonds. Vivek Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture stated that India and Mongolia are shaping a partnership grounded in shared civilizational memory and cultural kinship. He noted cooperation in strategic sectors, including the oil refinery project, defense, education, and manuscript

preservation initiatives such as the dissemination of the Mongolian Kangyur. Under Project Mausam and Project Brihattar Bharat, efforts are being made to document and preserve shared intangible heritage for multinational recognition at UNESCO.

Ambassador Ganbold Dambajav described India as Mongolia's spiritual neighbor and a key regional partner. He highlighted Buddhism as a central shared value and referred to the preservation and translation of classical Buddhist texts, including the Kangyur and Tengyur. He expressed appreciation for India's support in their dissemination and noted the expanding partnership between the two countries.

The conference provides a platform for scholars to examine the historical, cultural, and spiritual ties between India and Mongolia, including archaeological links, religious and literary traditions, Sanskrit manuscripts in Mongolia, artistic exchanges, and shared material heritage.

GMC Jammu hosts CME, Medical Student Research Exchange Programme

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: CME and Medical Student Research Exchange Programme held by Student Research and Development Council, Govt. Medical College, Jammu on Thursday.

Wherein, MBBS students of GMC, Jammu made presentations on Basics of Research Methodology and Topics like choosing a research question, randomized clinical trial, analytical study designs, Placebo and Blinding in research and systematic review and meta analysis as well as study protocol writing. Besides this, the research requirement for STS ICMR Projects as well as USMLE and PLAB was also discussed and deliberated by students and faculty members.



A medical student receiving certificate from Principal GMC Dr Ashutosh.

In the current CME and Medical Student Research Exchange Programme medical students from various medical colleges like ASCOMS, Jammu, AIIMS JAMMU, GMC, Doda, GMC, Udhampur, GMC, Kathua, GMC, Rajouri and Govt. Ayurvedic

College, Akhnoor participated and did the brain storming. The Student Research and Development Council was formed in 2023 with the main objectives to create awareness and promote culture of research at the beginning of the carrier of medical stu-

dents. The SRDC has conducted various research activities, held national conferences, various CME's on research methodologies as well as debates session till date. Many students have been granted STS ICMR research proposal after the constitution of SRDC.

The SRDC is being chaired by Professor Dr. Vishal R. Tandon and is under direct supervision and control of Principal & Dean, Govt. Medical College, Jammu, the other members of SRDC are Dr. Zahur Hussain, Dr. Sharminder Kaur Johar, Dr. Rashmi Kumari Gupta, Dr. Rajat Gupta, Dr. Ashima Badyal, Dr. Neha Mahajan, Dr. Pallavi Mahajan, Dr. Vinod Kumar Katil.

Lavit Verma of JKPS Panjtirthi wins gold medal in 11th Jammu Division Karate-Do C'ship

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: With great pride and joy, JK Public School, Panjtirthi celebrated the remarkable achievement of Lavit Verma of Class 4th who clinched Gold Medal in the Kata Event at the 11th Jammu Division Karate-Do Championship organised by the Traditional Karate Association.

Around 170 karatekas from various districts, clubs, and schools participated in the championship, making the competition highly challenging and competitive. Lavit showcased exceptional skill, discipline, and dedication.

The Principal of JK Public School, Panjtirthi, Suman Banbah congratulated Lavit on his outstanding achievement. She appreciated his hard work and determination and expressed immense pride in his success. She further encouraged all students to actively participate in sports and co-curricular



activities to develop confidence, discipline, and a spirit of excellence.